



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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July 7, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT - YOU ARE THE
DIFFERENCE FOUNDATION, INC. - LOVING LIFE HOME I AND II
GROUP HOMES**

We have completed a review of Loving Life Home I and II Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by You Are The Difference Foundation, Inc. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department.

Loving Life Home I Group Home is an eight-bed facility and Loving Life Home II Group Home is a six-bed facility. Both Group Homes provide care for boys ages 11-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Loving Life Home I Group Home was providing services for seven Los Angeles County Probation children and Loving Life Home II Group Home was providing services for six Los Angeles County Probation children.

The Group Homes are located in the Second District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of our review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. In addition, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, employee records, a facility

inspection and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to address several deficient areas. For example:

- Both Group Homes need to complete initial Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) for all children within thirty days of placement and develop comprehensive NSPs that include short term goals and input from all members of the treatment team.
- Loving Life Home I Group Home needs to repair the floor in bathroom two, replace all the bed pillows, provide sufficient quality recreational equipment and maintain current court authorizations for all children taking psychotropic medication.
- Loving Life Home II Group Home needs to replace all the bed pillows and bedspreads, repaint walls in bedroom three, and provide a variety of age-appropriate reading materials.

It should be noted that many of these deficiencies were also noted in our last monitoring report dated May 30, 2006.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

Board of Supervisors

July 7, 2009

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If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:JET:DC:AA:ek

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, DCFS
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, DCFS
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
Billie Woods, Board President, You Are The Difference Foundation, Inc.
Alice Brown, Executive Director, You Are The Difference Foundation, Inc.
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**You Are The Difference Foundation, Inc.
Loving Life Home I Group Home
Compton, CA 90221
License Number: 191600183
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Loving Life Home I Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

Overall, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained and provides a home-like environment. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. However, the linoleum tiles on the floor of bathroom two are damaged.

Generally, children's bedrooms are well maintained and sleeping arrangements are appropriate. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space, and window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable and the beds all have a full complement of linens. However, all the bed pillows are dirty.

There are board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available. However, the Group Home does not provide a variety of good quality recreational equipment. The Group Home only provided weight lifting equipment that was in poor condition and non-functional.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendations

1. You Are The Difference Foundation management:

- a. Repair the floor in bathroom two.**
- b. Replace all the bed pillows.**
- c. Provide an appropriate quantity and quality of recreational equipment.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. The case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current and include long term goals. However, the initial Needs and Services Plans are not completed within thirty days of the children's placement. In addition, the NSPs are not comprehensive, do not include short term goals, and the treatment team does not participate in the development and implementation of the NSPs

Recommendations

2. You Are The Difference Foundation management:

- a. Complete initial Needs and Services Plans within thirty days of placement.
- b. Include all members of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.
- c. Develop comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that include short term goals.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are attending school, are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs, and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendation

None.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest. The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendation

None.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

The Group Home maintains adequate documentation to support that the children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist. The children are informed about their psychotropic medication, are aware of their right to refuse medication, and medication distribution logs are properly maintained. However, the children do not have current court authorizations for the psychotropic medication that they are taking.

Recommendation

- 3. You Are The Difference Foundation management maintain current court authorizations for all children taking psychotropic medication.**

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Interviews with children

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, have private visitors, and attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks. Children also receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

Recommendation

None.

VII. Clothing and Allowance**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

None.

VIII. Personnel Background Checks

Method of assessment - Review of relevant documents

Sample size for employee record evaluation: Six

Comments:

The Group Home has obtained the required criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees.

Recommendation

None.

**You Are The Difference Foundation, Inc.
Loving Life Home II Group Home
Los Angeles, CA 90047
License Number: 191600183
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Loving Life Home II Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

The interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment.

Overall, children's bedrooms are well maintained and the children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable. However, the bedspreads are torn, pillows are dirty, and the wall paint in bedroom three is peeling.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods and maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are board games, a TV, a DVD player and a computer with a variety of programs. However, the Group Home does not have a variety of current and age-appropriate reading materials.

Recommendations

1. You Are The Difference Foundation management:

- a. Replace all the bedspreads.**
- b. Replace all the bed pillows.**
- c. Repaint the walls in bedroom three.**
- d. Provide an appropriate quantity and quality of reading materials.**

II. Program Services**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews****Sample size: Two****Comments:**

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. The case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current and include long term goals. However, the initial Needs and Services Plans are not completed within thirty days of the children's placement. In addition, the NSPs are not comprehensive, do not include short term goals, and the treatment team does not participate in the development and implementation of the NSPs.

Recommendations**2. You Are The Difference Foundation management:**

- a. Complete initial Needs and Services Plans within thirty days of placement.
- b. Include all members of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.
- c. Develop comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that include short term goals.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews****Sample size: Two****Comments:**

Children are attending school, are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs, and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendation

None.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest. The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendation

None.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

According to the Agency's management, there are currently no children taking psychotropic medications. This information is appropriately documented.

Children are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Recommendation

None.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Interviews with children

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, have private visitors, and attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks. Children also receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

Recommendation

None.

VII. Clothing and Allowance**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

None.

VIII. Personnel Background Checks

Method of assessment - Review of relevant documents

Sample size for employee record evaluation: Four

Comments:

The Group Home has obtained the required criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees.

Recommendation

None.

November 23, 2008

County of Los Angeles
Department of Auditor-Controller
Children Group Home Ombudsman Division
360 S. Figueroa Street, 8th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90071

Candace Rhue, Group Home Audit Supervisor

Enclosed is the Corrective Action Plan response to the recent audit completed on or about November 05, 2008. The following detailed information has been implemented to insure that these facilities remain in compliance with requirements and in accordance with recommendations made by the Auditor-Controller

If any additional information is required please contact me at (310) 608-0150

Thank you,

Alice Brown
Administrator

The following recommendations have been corrected.
Loving Life Group Home 1

1. Facility and Environment

A. Repair the floor in bathroom two

New flooring has been placed in bathroom two by facility maintenance man
(picture attached)

B. Replace the bed pillows

New bed pillows were purchased by Administrator and placed o all beds.
(picture attached)

C. Provide an appropriate quantity and quality of recreational equipment.

Administrator has assessed the need for more recreational equipment and has added a treadmill, foosballs game, weights with benches, and a ting tong ball table game.

Loving Life Home1

**The following recommendations have been corrected
Loving Life 1 Home**

2. Program Services

A. Complete initial Needs and Services Plan within thirty days of placement.

**The LCSW and Administrator have implemented a new action plan to insure
that all NSP's are completed in thirty days for placement**

**B. Include input from treatment team in the development and implementation of
the NSP's**

**LCSW and Administrator have detailed dates and times for treatment team to
collaborate and develop information for the NSP's**

C. Maintain NSP's that are comprehensive and include short term goal

**LCSW and Administrator alone with treatment team and resident will include
short term goals in all NSP's for each resident.**

3. Psychotropic Medications

**You are the Difference Foundation management will
maintain current court authorizations for all children**

**A. You Are the Difference Foundation management will insure that all Psychotropic
Medication for resident's receiving such are current and are approved by the
resident's court.**

**All charts will include an updated authorization form date stamped and approved
by the court.**

The following recommendations have been corrected
Loving Life Group Home 11

1. Facility and Environment

A. Replace all the bedspreads

New bedspreads were purchased by Administrator and placed on all beds.
(picture attached)

B. Replace all bed pillows

New bed pillows were purchased by Administrator and placed on all beds
(picture attached)

C. Repair the walls in bedroom three

Facility maintenance man sanded and painted wall in bedroom three.
(picture attached)

D. Provide an appropriate quantity and quality of books and resource materials.

The administrator and teacher tutor has gathered a library of software, books, videos, and educational computer games proven to entertain and stimulate the mind.

Loving Life Home 11

The following recommendations have been corrected
Loving Life 11 Home

2. Program Services

A. Complete initial Needs and Services Plan within thirty days of placement.

The LCSW and Administrator have implemented a new action plan to insure that all NSP's are completed in thirty days for placement

B. Include input from treatment team in the development and implementation of the NSP's

LCSW and Administrator have detailed dates and times for treatment team to collaborate and develop information for the NSP's

C. Maintain NSP's that are comprehensive and include short term goal

LCSW and Administrator alone with treatment team and resident will include short term goals in all NSP's for each resident.